



MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

P.O. Box 157-A, Whitfield, MS 39193
Phone (601) 351-8018 Fax (601) 351-8364
www.msh.state.ms.us

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Contact: Adam Moore (601) 351-8262, adam.moore@msh.state.ms.us

MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL CONTINUES TO ‘THINK RECOVERY’

WHITFIELD— While National Recovery Month was recognized across the country in September, Mississippi State Hospital and the Department of Mental Health are continuing to celebrate recovery and the strides made by those living with mental illnesses.

The department has introduced its “Think Recovery” campaign as DMH programs across the state are highlighting the various components of recovery and sharing stories of success from individuals who are in recovery and living successful lives.

One of those success stories belongs to Chris Marcell, a resident of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Now president of the Gulf Coast affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Marcell has shared his story of recovery throughout the state. He recently had some of his artwork selected for NARSAD Artworks, a non-profit, volunteer organization that showcases museum-quality artwork by artists whose lives have all been touched by mental illness.

Marcell painted “Bird In A Tree” while he was receiving inpatient treatment at Mississippi State Hospital in 2007. In his painting, a small bird is momentarily perched on one branch in the much larger complex of the tree. Marcell said this metaphor has proved to become the new definition of his life in recovery and management of mental illness since his return to the residential community in spring of 2008.

A native of Seattle, Washington, Marcell studied theater and dance in college. Afterwards, he went into drumming and did his best to travel across the country playing rock music. He pulled in to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in January of 2000.

However, along with his mental health diagnosis, Marcell has a co-occurring condition of drug and alcohol abuse. Despite his creativity, spirit and inspiration to create original music, he had a difficult and intermittent journey in the arts, and was eventually hospitalized.

While receiving treatment at MSH, Marcell took Art Therapy and Music Therapy classes as part of the curriculum of educational, rehabilitative, and recovery-oriented classes taught by specialists, nurses, therapists, and counselors. In addition to those classes the patients are given the opportunity to experience spirituality, which Marcell said had an impact on him.

“I was given a chance to grasp the basic concept of using ‘Wise Mind’; the opportunity to experience guided meditation; and all the while receiving specific information about mental health diagnosis and recovery principles,” Marcell said.

“I took hospitalization as open mindedly as I could at the time. I am grateful to the Mississippi Department of Mental Health for caring for me when I could not care for myself.”

He has since become involved with National Alliance on Mental Illness Mississippi (NAMI). Marcell has been trained to provide peer support through the programs of NAMI — a grassroots, non-profit organization which provides education, support and advocacy for persons who have mental health diagnosis. NAMI provides services for family members, caregivers, providers, and professionals as well.

“NAMI is a key psychosocial experience in my journey of recovery,” Marcell said. “In fact, NAMI is the largest grassroots organization helping people with mental illness in the nation. I am challenged to function responsibly and with a high degree of credibility through this organization. It is linked to my future,” he said. “And, it’s family friendly!”

Chris Marcell has become a new man and a new artist over the past five years. He has ceased using drugs and alcohol and participates in a 12 step fellowship with the help of a sponsor. He is in active recovery, making and maintaining progress. A very creative person, Marcell has had dreams of being a serious artist for a long time.

“To have my painting shown is a wonderful credit!” he exclaims. “It inspires me to produce another work of art!”

If you or someone you know is in need of services and supports, call the DMH 24 hour-a-day, 7 days a week at 1-877-210-8513 or visit www.dmh.ms.gov. For more information about *Think Recovery*, visit www.dmh.ms.gov. For more information about the National Alliance on Mental Illness, visit www.namims.org.

MSH, a facility of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, was founded in 1855 and facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services, by rehabilitating to the least restrictive environment, utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services, which reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.

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PHOTO ATTACHED: Chris Marcell – Chris Marcell is pictured here with his painting “Bird In A Tree,” which he painted while receiving treatment at Mississippi State Hospital. Marcell is now living a life in recovery and is president of the Gulf Coast affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.